



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Western Region Notes

DECEMBER 18, 2003

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



Holiday Greetings to everyone in the NWS Western Region. As each of us participate in activities that highlight the seasonal events, I hope you will take a moment to also reflect on the tremendous successes you have accomplished this year, both individually and collectively within your respective offices. I am proud to lead this region and credit all employees for their teamwork and dedication to protecting the lives and property of the citizens and guests in this country. Happy Holidays to All!

National Cline Award Winner: Congratulations to Troy Nicolini (WFO Eureka), winner of the 2003 Isaac M. Cline Award in the category of Hydrology.

Troy is being recognized for successful completion of a broad assortment of projects with both local and national significance. In the research arena, Troy developed an innovative method to estimate the flood stage for river forecast points, and he pioneered work in computational forecast methods for the interface between rivers and the ocean. In the training arena, he took a leadership role in developing a COMET web-based hydrology training module. Troy has also been very active in outreach activities. Congratulations, Troy!

AROUND THE REGION



(L to R) Lt Kurt Dreflak (NOAA Corp), John Clancy (NOAA Fisheries), and Nancy Dean and Troy Nicolini (NOAA NWS) represent NOAA at the Humboldt State career fair.

WFO Eureka Joins other NOAA Offices for Career Day:

Representatives from three NOAA line offices collaborated at the Humboldt State University (HSU) 40th annual Natural Resources and Sciences Career Day on Friday, December 5. HSU is located in northwest California. John Clancy (of NOAA Fisheries in Arcata, CA), Kurt Dreflak Lt JG (of NOAA Corp in Santa Rosa, CA), and Nancy Dean and Troy Nicolini of the National Weather Service in Eureka, CA, all represented NOAA at the day long career fair and provided one stop shopping for those interested in NOAA careers.



Reno MIC Jane Hollingsworth meets 2nd graders from Mark Twain Elementary School in Carson City during the National Science Teachers Association Western Region meeting in Reno. The students attended as part of their "Business Kids" organization.

National Science Teachers Association Meeting:

On December 4-6, staff from WFO Reno and WRH participated in the National Science Teachers Association Western Region Annual Meeting in Reno. More than 2,100 teachers and administrators attended. NWS was part of the overall NOAA exhibit team. WR invited a NASA educator to share his recent NOAA Teacher At Sea experiences while aboard the NOAA Ship Ron Brown this April.

The WFO Reno staff who helped at the NOAA exhibit included MIC Jane Hollingsworth, SOO Jim Fischer, and forecasters Brian O'Hara and Gina Beninato. NOAA Public Affairs Officers Marilu Trainor and Joyce Gross organized the agency's participation in the event.



Taking weather observations is a family affair for the Sanders family of Ft. Thomas, AZ. Norma Sanders (front row, second from right) is shown with several of her children and grandchildren, who have all participated as weather observers. Also pictured is Tucson MIC Glen Sampson (back row, third from right).

2003 Holm Awards Presented:

Sanders Family - Ft. Thomas, AZ: WFO Tucson presented one of the 2003 John C Campanius Holm awards to the Norman and Nancy Sanders family in Fort Thomas, Arizona, on December 13. MIC Glen Sampson recognized members of three generations of the family who have served more than 45 years as NWS Cooperative Weather Observers.

The award was presented at a family picnic on the Sanders's farm, which was attended by more than 35 family members. The award cited three generations of the family for more than 45 years of accurate and timely weather reports, which played a critical role in defining the climate and rainfall patterns of Fort Thomas and aided in flood forecasting for the Gila River Basin.



(L to R) MIC Dan Keeton and CPM Dessa Garton present Sandy Nott with the prestigious Holm Award during a ceremony at WFO Oxnard.

Sandy Nott - Twitchel Dam, CA: On December 16, WFO Oxnard presented a Holm award to Sandy Nott, a cooperative weather observer at Twitchell Dam. During a ceremony at the WFO, MIC Dan Keeton recognized Mrs. Nott for her dedication to reporting weather and evaporation observations for more than 40 years.

WFOs San Diego and Oxnard Participate in Post-Burn Meetings: On December 3, WFO San Diego participated in an event sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security for residents living in areas recently impacted by the October 2003 wildfires in Southern California. The event was held at the Harrison Canyon Park in San Bernardino, and NWS representatives, San Diego WCM Ed Clark and Oxnard WCM Tim McClung, addressed the weather patterns Southern California can expect this coming winter as they relate to the areas that are potential flood risks identified by FEMA.

WFO Oxnard also got involved in post-burn meetings. A series of four flood protection meetings were held within Ventura County during the first two weeks of December. The meetings were held in the recent burn affected communities of Piru, Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Fillmore. The series of meetings was coordinated by Ventura County Operations of Emergency Services (OES) in conjunction with NWS, US Forest Service, Ventura County Watershed Protection District (formerly Flood Control), and local elected officials. Presentations were made by local, county, state, and federal agencies. Total public attendance at the four events was approximately 120 persons. Presentations by Oxnard staff (WCM Tim McClung and SOO Dave Danielson) included a discussion on the upcoming winter forecast, special NWS focus on local burn areas, El Nino/La Nina effects, and mud/debris flow preparedness measures for residents. Other presenters discussed soil structure/damage information, reconstitution efforts, and updates on local drainage basin clearing efforts.

WFO Tucson Joins Other Agencies for a "Field Conference": On December 10, the Arizona Department of Emergency Management's (AZDEM) Aspen Fire Post-Fire Flood Mitigation Task Force convened a "field conference" to look at the remote backside of the Aspen Fire burn. Present were AZDEM, AZ Water Resources Department, US Forest Service, USGS, NWS Tucson, a county engineer, and four members of the LA office of the Army Corps of Engineers. Sites where dwellings or infrastructure are in harms way were examined. One location in Alder Canyon was identified as a prospective site for an ALERT stream gage. The NWS Tucson hydrologist and the USGS are working with state officials to possibly site an ALERT gage.



ASA Workshop participants gather for a photo.

Western Region ASA Workshop: On December 2-3, Western Region Headquarters (WRH) hosted a regional ASA workshop in Salt Lake City. The purpose of the workshop was to provide training in budget tracking and reconciliation. Other topics included fire weather time keeping, procurement, property, and student SCEP/STEP programs. Presentations were given by the WRH Administrative Management Division, with a presentation by Paul Spizzirri (of WASC Financial Management).

NOAA Weather Radio - Mono County, CA: On December 18, WFO Reno announced that a new NOAA Weather/All Hazards Radio transmitter has been installed in Mono County, California. The new radio provides severe weather, flood, and other disaster information to Mono County, including the Mammoth Lakes area. The transmitter is located on Conway Summit, just north of Mono Lake. With the addition of this transmitter, motorists on U.S. Highway 395 can receive NOAA Weather Radio information from northern Inyo County to north of Reno. The WNG-595 transmitter was purchased by Mono County with a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Mono County will pay for maintenance of the radio station, while the National Weather Service will pay for relaying the weather information to the transmitter.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

STATEMENT of the Week: This week's statement is a PFM from Missoula MT, chosen to illustrate the proper format for the introduction lines for each PFM site.

POINT FORECAST MATRICES
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MISSOULA MT
226 AM MST TUE DEC 16 2003

MTZ005-162126-
MISSOULA-MISSOULA MT
46.92N 114.08W
226 AM MST TUE DEC 16 2003

| DATE | TUE 12/16/03 | | | | | | | | | | WED 12/17/03 | | | | | | | | | | THU 12/18/03 | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| UTC 3HRLY | 10 | 13 | 16 | 19 | 22 | 01 | 04 | 07 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 19 | 22 | 01 | 04 | 07 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 19 | 22 | 01 | | | | | | | | |
| MST 3HRLY | 03 | 06 | 09 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 00 | 03 | 06 | 09 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 00 | 03 | 06 | 09 | 12 | 15 | 18 | | | | | | | | |
| MAX/MIN | 36 | | | | | | | | | | 28 | | | | | | | | | | 36 | | | | | | | | | |
| TEMP | 23 | 23 | 24 | 32 | 35 | 32 | 32 | 31 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 34 | 35 | 30 | 29 | 27 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 30 | 33 | 30 | | | | | | | | |
| DEWPT | 21 | 22 | 21 | 23 | 20 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 23 | 26 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 21 | 20 | 18 | | | | | | | | |
| RH | 92 | 96 | 88 | 69 | 54 | 53 | 58 | 66 | 75 | 81 | 78 | 72 | 66 | 66 | 72 | 78 | 81 | 84 | 74 | 69 | 58 | 60 | | | | | | | | |
| WIND DIR | SE | S | S | S | S | S | S | W | W | NW | NW | NW | NW | S | S | S | SE | SE | SE | SE | SW | | | | | | | | | |
| WIND SPD | 3 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 12 | | | | | | | | | |
| CLOUDS | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | OV | OV | OV | OV | BK | BK | SC | SC | BK | BK | BK | BK | SC | SC | SC | BK | | | | | | | | | |
| POP 12HR | 10 | | | | | | | | | | 50 | | | | | | | | | | 30 | | | | | | | | | |
| QPF 12HR | 0.01 | | | | | | | | | | 0.08 | | | | | | | | | | 0.03 | | | | | | | | | |
| SNOW 12HR | 00-00 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | T | | | | | | | | | |
| SNOW | C | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | |
| RAIN | C | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| SNOWSHWRS | C | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | |

| DATE | FRI 12/19/03 | | | | | SAT 12/20/03 | | | | | SUN 12/21/03 | | | | | MON 12/22/03 | | | | |
|------------|--------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| UTC 6HRLY | 07 | 13 | 19 | 01 | 07 | 13 | 19 | 01 | 07 | 13 | 19 | 01 | 07 | 13 | 19 | 01 | | | | |
| MST 6HRLY | 00 | 06 | 12 | 18 | 00 | 06 | 12 | 18 | 00 | 06 | 12 | 18 | 00 | 06 | 12 | 18 | | | | |
| MIN/MAX | 25 35 | | | | | 24 34 | | | | | 26 35 | | | | | 27 35 | | | | |
| TEMP | 28 | 26 | 32 | 30 | 28 | 25 | 31 | 30 | 29 | 27 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 28 | 33 | 31 | | | | |
| DEWPT | 21 | 21 | 23 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 21 | 23 | 20 | | | | |
| PWIND DIR | SW | | | | | SW | | | | | SW | | | | | W | | | | |
| WIND CHAR | GN | | | | | GN | | | | | GN | | | | | GN | | | | |
| AVG CLOUDS | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | BK | | | | |
| POP 12HR | 20 | | | | | 30 | | | | | 20 | | | | | 30 | | | | |
| SNOW | S | | | | | C | | | | | S | | | | | C | | | | |
| RAIN | S | S | | | | C | C | C | S | S | C | C | C | C | C | C | | | | |

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The lines in bold above have been causing the most errors nationally among PFMs. Instruction 10-503 is not clear about these lines, so WR WFOs are reminded to please make sure the "City-County ST" line is in this exact format, with no extra spaces or commas; and, make sure the lat/lon matches up with the lat/lon of a verifiable observation point.

All WR offices must be issuing PFMs by December 31st. Also by the 31st, all public products must be in the formats as depicted in the current set of NWS Instructions. This is imperative in order to display the products on various NWS web sites.

Another format change took effect on December 16: the LSR format contains more detail. The AWIPS LSR program automatically switched to the new format today. Following is the first LSR issued in WR in the new format, from WFO Seattle:

PRELIMINARY LOCAL STORM REPORT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SEATTLE WA
957 AM PST TUE DEC 16 2003

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| ..TIME... | ...EVENT... | ...CITY LOCATION... | ...LAT.LON... |
| ..DATE... | ...MAG.... | ..COUNTY LOCATION...ST.. | ...SOURCE.... |
| | ..REMARKS.. | | |

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 0956 AM | NON-TSTM WND GST 6 NNW SUDDEN VALLEY | 48.80N 122.37W |
| 12/16/2003 | 49 MPH WHATCOM WA | TRAINED SPOTTER |

OCCURRED AT 948AM.

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(L to R) Ham Operators are hard at work at WFO Elko. Picture here are: Joe Giraudo, Gene d'Asto, Lee Radford, Dave Hough, and Tim Sedlock

Western Region Offices Support SKYWARN

Recognition Day: Several Western Region WFOs supported the fifth annual SKYWARN Recognition Day, which ran for 24 hours from Friday evening, December 5 to Saturday evening, December 6. This national exercise was co-sponsored by the Amateur Radio Relay League. SKYWARN Recognition Day celebrates the contributions made by the many volunteer SKYWARN radio operators to the NWS. The goal, as in previous years, was to make as many contacts as possible between NWS offices and other ham radio operators, both around the nation and around the world.

In Western Region, WFO Flagstaff conducted its first-ever SKYWARN Recognition Day activities, which included participation by seven amateur radio operators from three counties in northern Arizona. Flagstaff's activities included a detailed weather briefing and spotter training conducted by NWS staff. After familiarizing themselves with the new radio installed in the office, the operators spent the remainder of the event making contacts with others throughout the country and abroad.

In northeastern Nevada, nine members of the Elko Amateur Radio Club and three forecasters from the WFO Elko staff had a busy, but highly successful event. Altogether, the group made 368 radio contacts, including two in Canada and one in Puerto Rico.

WFO Glasgow participated in its third year of this event with nine ham radio operators. The group made 348 contacts around the United States and Canada, and also contacted 44 other NWS offices (a 63 percent increase over last year). One of the operators made contact with 54 people in a single hour, including some who were caught in a major winter storm in New England and eastern Canada.

SKYWARN Recognition Day in Spokane had media coverage by a local TV station, which included a short interview and some video coverage. Although the number of contacts at WFO Spokane were somewhat fewer than in previous year's events (118 contacts and 23 other NWS offices contacted this year), the 14 operators participating were very dedicated. They set up their antenna in a cold, driving rain and worked long shifts, with some even sleeping on the floor during off-periods. Despite making fewer contacts, coverage was wide-ranging (31 states) and among the most distant, including Alaska and Eastern Kiribati -- a remote island in the tropical Pacific.



Frank Nance, 78 years old, celebrated his birthday during SKYWARN Recognition Day activities in Reno. Nance used his skills by transmitting several messages via Morse Code.

The activities in Reno, Nevada, were among the largest in scope, and had local media coverage, as well (two local TV stations). The 25 ham operators participating also had some visitors come in from the National Science Teachers Association conference (being held in Reno) to observe operations at the WFO. They made 46 contacts in 33 states and nine other countries -- as far away as Argentina and Australia. They also made contact with operators working at Environment Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Other offices participating in this year's event included WFO Los Angeles/Oxnard, which contacted 37 sites around the country -- as far away as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Granville, South Carolina. In Billings, Montana, 15 ham radio operators (including one 11-year-old boy) made over 300 contacts, including 40 NWS offices. Operators in Las Vegas operated out of a converted trailer, set up outside the WFO, and made many contacts, including 40 other NWS offices, the Storm Prediction Center, and the National Hurricane Center. At WFO Seattle, operators (including two from the office staff) made 39 contacts. In Sacramento, ham operators brought their equipment in and worked the entire event out of the parking lot. WFOs Salt Lake City and Pocatello also participated in this year's SKYWARN event.

As illustrated by the high number and wide-ranging nature of the contacts, these ham radio operators play a very significant role in NWS operations, particularly during hazardous weather events. At times, these radio operators provide the only communications link to areas stricken by severe weather. They work side by side with NWS forecasters to collect and relay vital weather information. All in all, this year's SKYWARN Recognition Day events were a great success throughout Western Region. The day's activities provided an opportunity for radio operators to practice their skills and strengthen their ties with NWS forecasters around the nation.

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Colorado River Water Users Association Conference: The 58th Annual Conference of the Colorado River Water Users Association was held during December 10-12 in Las Vegas. The Colorado River Water Users Association (<http://www.crwua.org/>) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, formed to plan, study, formulate, and advise on ways to protect and safeguard the interests of all who use the Colorado River. The conference was attended by about 650 water users. Dave Brandon, HIC at the CBRFC addressed the conference and provided a historical perspective and an early season outlook for upcoming seasonal spring runoff in the Colorado Basin.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

WR Webmaster Workshop, Jan 27-29, Reno: The date of the WR Webmaster workshop has been set for January 27-29. The focus of the workshop will be upgrading to the new web farm, IFPS web page implementation, AHPS web pages, meeting NWS web policy, security, and other issues. Each office has been asked to send one participant. **IMPORTANT:** All reservations need to be made at the Hotel by December 27, 2003. Please send your names and titles for your name-tags to Becky Hammond by December 27, by email to rebecca.hammond@noaa.gov.

WR Technical Attachment: WR Technical Attachment 03-10 titled: The Campo Bonito Wash Flash Flood of August 14, 2003: A Heavy Rain Event on a Recent Burn, was released last month. The author is Mike Schaffner from the Tuscon, Arizona Office. The TA can be found on the web at:
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrhq/03TAs/0310/index.html>

WR Technical Attachment 03-11 titled: Redefining the Small Craft Advisory for Hazardous Seas, was released early this month. The author is John Lovegrove from the Weather Forecast office in Eureka, CA. The TA can be found on the web at:
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrhq/03TAs/0311/index.html>

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

ESA Conference: The first ever National ESA conference was held in Las Vegas, NV, December 9-11. ESAs from across the country met along with members from all regional headquarters and National Headquarters. Many important issues facing ESAs were discussed. There were invaluable opportunities for ESAs from all regions to collaborate and exchange ideas. The event was a huge success. The significant importance of ESAs meeting on a national level was clearly recognized as planning for next National ESA conference and frequency of such an event was discussed by the Regional SOD chiefs and John McNulty, Director of OOS.

Archive II Project: Radar Archive II systems have been shipped to the final five Western Region sites. Once installed, the radar Archive II data collection project will be complete. This should occur within the next week. NCDC will be receiving the Archive II data electronically via a wide area network. This eliminates the need to support the troublesome local archive devices.

NWR: The Livingston, MT NWR transmitter is in operation. The Transmitter was installed by Joe Lachacz, Darrel Elliott, and Dennis Schuelka. This installation is a Park County and NWS Venture and could not have been done without the support of Jim Scarlett (WCM). The transmitter will become official December 25.

Safety: Answers to the SAFETY ATTITUDE QUIZ

- 1) If you don't take safety seriously, you don't hurt anyone but yourself
b. false, your just as likely to cause injuries or dangerous exposures to others
- 2) Having a positive attitude toward safety includes:
a. using the personal protective equipment provided
- 3) Most work accidents are caused by
b. careless, unsafe acts
- 4) If you've done a job many times without an accident, you can skip steps without any risks.
b. false, It's always dangerous to skip safety steps
- 5) Being upset or angry can create a poor safety attitude because:
a. it distracts you from your job, making risky mistakes more likely
- 6) Every employee should take personal responsibility for every employee's safety.
a. true, Safety is a team effort
- 7) An example of taking the right attitude toward safety is:
c. know and follow safety rules and work procedures
- 8) When you can't remember a particular safety procedure, you should
b. ask
- 9) If you spot a possible safety hazard, you should
c. fix it or report it
- 10) One way to demonstrate a positive safety attitude is to
a. get involved in fixing or reporting safety problems before they become big problems